

Russian Spy Agency Rebuffs CIA Inquiry

U.S. 'Higher Level' Move Goes Unanswered

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A high-level CIA team sent to Moscow to discuss the case of accused spy Aldrich H. Ames was unable to extract useful information from the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service and is on its way back to Washington, U.S. officials said yesterday.

The Russian spy agency's response fell short of the Clinton administration's demand for cooperation, the officials said, adding that the matter was raised yesterday "at a higher level" of the Russian government but with no response so far.

Ames, a career CIA official who had access to a wide range of secrets including the recruitment of Soviet spies, was arrested Monday on charges that he had spied for

Moscow from at least 1985 to 1993. U.S. officials suspect the information he provided resulted in the execution of numerous CIA spies, but do not have proof.

CIA Director R. James Woolsey, on the defensive following the revelation of one of the most serious breaches of agency security, yesterday acknowledged the need to overhaul CIA safeguards. "There are important changes that need to be made in the way security policy is made and the way security is implemented" within the intelligence community, he told the House intelligence committee.

Rep. Robert G. Torricelli (D-N.J.), a member of the House panel, expressed concern about the possible presence of other double agents at the CIA, saying that Ames "may not have been alone in recog-

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nizing that . . . [security] procedures were not working."

Replied Woolsey, "Your point is well made, and I definitely take it."

The CIA team sent to Moscow, which included senior officials from the agency's Operations Directorate where Ames worked, was greeted in Russia by a "less than cooperative attitude," an administration official said. The encounter was "not productive," said another official.

The United States, in a series of formal and informal exchanges with the Russians over the past three days, has asked that several steps be taken both to lessen the harm done to U.S. intelligence operations and to signal that the Cold War era of hostilities between

Russia and the United States is over even if intelligence-gathering at some levels continues.

Administration officials said a request that Russia withdraw from Washington the intelligence agents who were directly involved in the Ames case also is not likely to be acted on immediately. The United States asked that Moscow voluntarily recall the agents, but American officials have not publicly said how many they suspect are involved.

The administration sought to signal its continued commitment to a new, friendlier period of U.S.-Russian relations by not declaring the agents "persona non grata," a step that would lead to their immediate expulsion and possibly provoke retaliation by Moscow. But a senior U.S. official said Washington is now considering "a good Cold War 'png'-war" because of Moscow's delay in responding. "A lot of things are at stake," the official added.

Despite the lack of immediate cooperation from the Russians on any of the U.S. demands, another senior official said yesterday that the White House still "expects cooperation, in the sense that we anticipate that yes, they will in time meet our requirements." White House press secretary Dee Dee Myers, in outlining the need for a Russian response, said earlier this week that the government "better take action or we will."

One official acknowledged yesterday that Yeltsin may not have sufficient control over the Russian intelligence agency to deliver the cooperation requested by the United States. "That is a concern," he said, "but I can assure you we are not letting up because of that concern. We still expect cooperation."

The Ames case has continued to create political problems for President Clinton, with many Republican lawmakers and a few Democrats, such as Senate intelligence committee Chairman Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), calling for a sus-

pension of aid to the Russians and a major investigation of the CIA's counterintelligence operations. The controversy has also expanded into questions about Clinton's overall Russia policy.

To try to address the questions, Clinton has called about 15 key Republican and Democratic members of Congress to a White House meeting this morning for what officials are calling a "Russia update." His aim will be to argue that the scandal should not cause a fundamental change in U.S. relations with Russia and that the members, as one official put it, "should be sober in addressing what steps if any should be taken."

DeConcini and Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.) formally asked the CIA's inspector general yesterday to conduct a detailed probe of the intelligence community's handling of the Ames case, beginning with its failure to notice Ames's alleged betrayal until 1991. By then, according to court documents, Ames had received most of the more than \$1.5 million Moscow is alleged to have paid him for various secrets.

DeConcini has also said he wants to learn more about why the executive branch did not arrest Ames earlier, given that suspicions began to focus on him some time ago. A CIA spokesman declined to comment on whether the inspector general would accept the request.

Meanwhile, Rep. Dan Glickman (R-Kan.), the House intelligence panel chairman, said yesterday that his committee was starting its own probe of the CIA's "internal controls and management of counterintelligence activities. . . . This is not and will not be a witch hunt. It will be, however, an aggressive examination of what went wrong and what must be done."

Sen. William S. Cohen (R-Maine) yesterday reintroduced legislation to change the CIA's counterintelligence system that was prepared in 1990 as the result of an expert study but never pursued by Congress after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The legislation would increase penalties for espionage, require more comprehensive reporting of foreign travel by those with access to classified materials, and give investigators wider latitude in obtaining financial records of suspected foreign agents.

It also would expand somewhat the use of polygraph examinations, a subject of growing controversy within the intelligence community in the wake of the disclosures that Ames passed two exams while allegedly spying for Moscow. An FBI official has told Congress that in retrospect, the second exam in 1991 should have raised some questions about Ames's activities, but did not.
